

14 September 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: C/Near East Africa Branch/Geographic
Division

SUBJECT : Tribal Summaries (CIA/ORR GS 64-29)

1. Subject study has several glaring defects that must be surfaced at this time in the hope of forestalling serious criticism from operational consumers who may depend upon the study in time of urgent need. The defects we have noted are:

a. The study abounds in anthropological jargon and as a consequence is very difficult to read, much less understand, addition of a glossary notwithstanding.

b. In discussing source, insufficient attention is given to emphasizing that [REDACTED] summaries are unevaluated; and that some may be of questionable validity.

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c. No bibliography is given to inform the reader of the best material available on any given tribe. The reader should at least be made aware that such bibliographies are present in the original [REDACTED]

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2. We recommend that Tribal Summaries be translated into lay language and then be published only as an interim study to be followed by:

a. An ORR/GRA-produced study covering about 15 of the largest and/or currently most politically and militarily important Congolese tribes.

b. A "definitive" study written to ORR specifications by academicians on contract. This study might include all Congolese tribes, the major tribes, or only a selected group of tribes.

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3.

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[REDACTED] have been well received and have established (somewhat of) a hallmark for ORR publication on the Congo. This reprinting -- with minor changes -- of [REDACTED] cards is not up to the previous high standard. We have had our greatest success with DDP consumers when we have been able to winnow out extraneous data so that the substantive material is unmistakably relevant to the operational problem, and to have the text written in a manner clearly understandable to the consumer. Tribal Summaries falls short of these objectives.

4. One last comment: Interest in publications on the Congo is particularly widespread at the moment -- both within DDP and in the Community -- so that anything written on the area will be examined by many people. For this reason, I suggest that this is a time for putting only the best foot forward.

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Title of Report REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TRIBAL SUMMARIES

Date Oct 64

Supplement to CIA/RR GS 64-28

Report No.

PM

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